

## Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Robert J. Papp's Remarks

At the

### Memorial Service for BMCS Terrell Horne III

Coast Guard Base Los Angeles/Long Beach  
Los Angeles, California  
Saturday, December 8, 2012

Good afternoon, Shipmates.

I know the vast majority of the people in this audience understand and value the term that I just used. But for the few people that may not be familiar with the term 'Shipmates', let me tell you that when a Coast Guardsman calls you Shipmate, what he's saying is that you are a member of the extended Coast Guard family.

It does my heart good to look across this audience and see so many members of our Coast Guard family. Active Duty, Reserve, Auxiliary, and civilian; the extended family of the Coast Guard that is represented by our Department of Homeland Security and the various components; our friends from local, state and federal law enforcement; and all of the others that are gathered here with us today to honor to our fallen shipmate.

I hope you listened very closely to that song that just played. The name of the song is American Anthem. It's long been a favorite song of mine. The first time I heard it sung was by Norah Jones, and I fell in love with it from the first time I heard it. And I fell in love with it even more when I heard the Coast Guard Band perform it with Petty Officer Weikleenget singing it.

So just about a year ago, I had an event at my home in Washington, D.C., and I asked some members of the Coast Guard Band to come down. And at the end of the dinner, the trio with Petty Officer Weikleenget performed American Anthem. And as my guests departed and the band members departed, the words of the song were still going through my head. And I hope you paid attention to that chorus. "Let them say of me, I was one who believed in sharing the blessings I received. Let me know in my heart, when my days are through, America, America, I gave my best to you." It's a song I think that plays to everybody that's ever served their country. And it's certainly a song that goes out to every American that says every *individual* American can contribute. And they can make a difference.

As I travel to Coast Guard units around the country and talk with the remarkable men and women who do this nation's work, I often speak about the difference that one person can make.

I tell them that to accomplish our mission, we must always work together as a Service. But I also tell them that while we come together to accomplish our mission, each of us –

each Coast Guardsman – is an individual, someone who is expected to make a difference.

Well, today we come together as a Service not to accomplish a mission, but to remember a shipmate who made a difference.

We come together to provide comfort and support to a family who is grieving, and to honor the manners of our profession.

We come together to honor the life and service of Senior Chief Terrell Horne.

Thank you for being with us today.

Congressman Rohrabacher, Congresswoman Hahn, you honor us with your presence.

My colleagues, Vice Admiral Zukunft, the Pacific Area Commander, and Rear Admiral Karl Schultz, the Eleventh District Commander.

Family, friends, everybody across the federal, state and local law enforcement community.

And my Coast Guard Shipmates. Thank you for being here.

But we are also here today because the manners of our profession compel us to be. We are a military service. A profession of arms. We commit ourselves to our nation and to each other and we put ourselves in harm's way. We are called to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. And when one of us gives all – *sacrifices all* – in pursuit of that noble endeavor, the manners of our profession demand that we stop and pay homage to that selfless service. To do otherwise would break the covenant we have, each to the other.

When I received the phone call early Sunday morning informing me of the death of Senior Chief Horne, I was reminded of that evening when the Coast Guard Band played American Anthem at my home. That night, while those words were still going through my head, the phone rang. And I was informed that one of our helicopters in Mobile, Alabama, the 6535, had gone down with the loss of four crew members. And at that time, I committed myself that when we did the memorial service, we'd bring the band and we'd play that song to honor the members of 6535. So for better or worse, I find myself connected to that song because I think of Coast Guardsmen every time that I hear it. And every time there is a mishap with one of our Coast Guardsmen, I think of it as well.

So when I received the call last Sunday concerning Senior Chief Horne, I had just returned from overseas visiting with our deployed Coast Guardsmen and our international partners, talking about how we might all best work together to confront the threats we are all facing. Threats like smuggling and illegal migration, illicit drugs and

safeguarding our coasts. The same threats that Senior Chief Horne and the crew of the HALIBUT, and all of those in our Coast Guard and in our Department, dedicate themselves to confronting every day.

And we talked, as we often do, in terms of strategy, and doctrine, and governance. And these things are important if we are to win these battles.

But we *always* know – and we must *never forget* – that such talk, *by itself*, will make no difference in this world.

It won't enforce itself. It won't patrol our coasts. It won't keep us safe.

If our plans and designs to keep our nation safe are to be anything other than hollow hope, if they are to be of any use to our service, our Department, or our Nation, there have to be selfless patriots who make the decision *every day* answer the nation's call, to throw themselves into the breach, to say to every manner of evil that might confront us: "I will be your shield, I will stand the watch."

Terrell Horne was such a patriot.

And I think 'patriot' is the right word. The word 'patriot' speaks to one who loves his country and his countrymen, and is prepared to defend them. And he was that.

But honestly, he was much more.

There are other words I could use to describe the commitment and sacrifice of Senior Chief Horne. I could say 'hero'. But we hear that term used so often these days, and, unfortunately, it is sometimes used too casually, in ways that don't merit the full weight of what that word is *supposed* to mean. And sometimes, because of that, I worry that the word has lost some of its impact, its import.

But make no mistake. Senior Chief Horne was, in every *true* sense of the word, a hero. His actions Sunday morning saved the life of a shipmate. As his boat was about to be rammed, just prior to impact, he reached forward, without concern for himself, and pushed his coxswain to safety. Let me say that again. He reached forward. Towards the point of impact. And he pushed his coxswain to safety.

He did what leaders do. Instinctively. Reflexively. He put his crew before himself. He knew that those who lead in our Service hold the lives of their crew in their hands. And leadership like that – like Senior Chief Horne displayed on Sunday and throughout his career – that kind of leadership is the very *soul* of our service.

And maybe *that* is the really the best word I can use to describe Senior Chief Horne. He was a leader.

His act in saving his crewmember was instinctive. A decision made in an instant without any thought other than the welfare of another. But with a leader like Senior Chief Horne, there is more to it than that.

It is a choice, freely made, every day, to set aside your own needs when faced with a decision that impacts others. It is a choice, made every day, to go the extra mile while always adhering to your principles. It is a choice, made every day, to be a leader, but to be a servant to those you lead.

And for 14 years Senior Chief Horne made that choice.

I'd like to speak for a moment to the Horne family.

Rachel, Miller and Kade - and all of Senior Chief Horne's family here with us – I can't begin to fathom the sense of loss you feel now. I can only tell you that because he made that choice every day, we are all better for it – *and the world is a better place*.

The time will come when your children will seek to know more about their father who was taken from them far too early. I hope you can find solace in that fact.

I hope there is comfort in knowing that he was a good man, an honorable man, who was revered by all that knew him. You can tell them they will grow up in a world that is a better place because their father made the decision to serve, and you can tell them – *I will tell them – he made a difference*. What he did, he did for you. So you could grow up in a world that is safer and more secure.

We all rely on leaders like Senior Chief Horne to inspire and motivate us; to teach and to mentor us – both subordinates and seniors alike; to uphold those core values and standards that bind us as a community and as a profession.

In our service we often talk of the “**long blue line**” of Coast Guardsmen. It describes all of those dedicated men and women who served before us. It speaks to their accomplishments, their commitment, and their sacrifice.

But it is much more than that. It is more than simply looking back in our wake and honoring those who have served. It is looking at the course we have set before us and the *obligation* we all have. To our country. To our Service. And to our people. People like Senior Chief Horne.

It is our legacy – and a reminder of the responsibility *we all have* to keep faith with those who came before.

Senior Chief Horne is now a part of our long, blue line. His service and sacrifice will forever be a part of our Service and will stand as a source of inspiration for us and for Coast Guardsmen not yet born.

Senior Chief Horne showed us that one person can truly make a difference, but as he takes his honored place in that long blue line, he proves that bound together, we are *unstoppable*.

He also reminds us that our commitment to protect our nation and her people from all manner of harm brought by the sea entails dangerous work. But we cannot, we will not, shrink from our duty to confront these dangers. To do so would be to turn our back on our duty and his memory.

As we grieve for the loss of our shipmate, we remember that for over 222 years others in that long blue line, dedicated Coast Guard men and women like Senior Chief Horne, have stepped forward – without hesitation, without reservation – to accept that sacred trust, to place the needs of their country first, and put service before self.

Through his actions, his sacrifice and his dedication to duty, Senior Chief Horne embodied the words of our Coast Guard Ethos: “I will protect them. I will defend them. I will save them. I am their shield.”

And America still needs that shield. The problems that confront us are not going away. The flow of illicit trade – in drugs, in people, and in all the many forms it takes – continues to threaten our homeland. Those engaged in this dark business are now bringing their traffic on, over, and *under* the sea. They are smart and growing smarter; bold and growing bolder – and they are a danger to our people and our home. But understand that we will continue to answer the call of those in peril, to fight the flow of drugs and migrants, to protect our borders and our shores from those who mean us harm. Let all those who would threaten our shores know that our purpose is clear and our resolve is strong. In the departure zone, the arrival zone, at sea or on our shores – we will not rest, we will not stop, we will not falter and we will not fail.

When I talk with people about what our Coast Guard does and who we are...

I tell them *we are the ones* who look out for those in peril on the sea.

I tell them *we are the ones* who protect the sea from all the harms that man can deliver.

And I tell them *we are the ones* who protect our nation and her people from *any* threat that comes by sea.

In short, I tell them that, like Senior Chief Horne, we are their shield. And we will always be there.

Because we are Coast Guardsmen.  
This is our chosen profession.  
This is our way.  
This is what we do.  
Thank you. And Semper Paratus.